

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-00

OMB-01 EB-08 FAA-00 DOTE-00 /064 W

-----081004Z 069478 /20

P R 080913Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2519

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1880

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, JA

SUBJECT: ROK/JAPANESE RELATIONS: TOKTO (TAKASHIMA) ISLAND

REF: SEOUL 1511

SUMMARY: JAPANESE POLCOUNS MABUCHI TELLS US HE HAS BEEN ALMOST TOTALLY PREOCCUPIED DURING PAST TWO WEEKS WITH BOTHER-SOME PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEMS CONCERNING TOKTO ISLAND THAT HAVE CONTINUED TO POP UP IN BOTH JAPANESE AND KOREAN PRESS. FOR THE TIME BEING HE SAID THE ISSUE IS BACK UNDER CONTROL. END SUMMARY.

1. MABUCHI FILLED POLCOUNS IN ON SEQUEL TO HIS CONVERSATIONS (REFTEL) WITH ACTING MOFA ASIA BUREAU DIRECTOR KONG RO MYUN CONCERNING TOKTO (TAKESHIMA). ACCORDING TO MABUCHI, GOJ RESPONDED TO ROKG PROTEST OF MEDIA AIRCRAFT OVERFLIGHTS AND MABUCHI'S RECOMMENDATION THAT SOME EFFORT BE MADE BY GOJ TO PREVENT FURTHER SUCH OVERFLIGHTS BY ISSUING "ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE" DIRECTING AIRCRAFT TO STAY OUR OF THE TOKTO AREA. MABUCHI POINTED OUT THAT THIS ACTION WAS TAKEN TO CALM THE ISSUE DESPITE THE FACT THAT GOJ HAD NO LEGAL RIGHT TO STOP SUCH FLIGHTS
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OVER "ITS OWN TERRITORY": AND THAT SINCE THEN AIRCRAFT HAD REMAINED CLEAR OF THE ISLAND.

2. MABUCHI SAID THAT THE DISPUTE ERUPTED AGAIN SUPERFICALLY AT LEAST WHEN JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER HATOYAMA WAS APPARENTLY FORCED LAST WEEK IN RESPONSE TO OPPOSITION PRESSURES IN THE DIET TO MAKE ANOTHER STRONG

CLAIM TO TOKTO/TAKESHIMA. MABUCHI WAS AGAIN CALLED IN TO MOFA MARCH 7 WHERE HE RECEIVED "RELATIVELY MILD" PROTEST FROM BUREAU DIRECTOR GONG. MABUCHI SAID THAT BOTH HE HERE IN SEOUL AND GAIMUSHO NORTHEAST ASIAN DIRECTO ENDO IN TOKYO HAD "PRIVATELY" TOLD THEIR KOREAN COUNTERPARTS THAT HATOYAMA STATEMENT WAS MADE UNDER "EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES," I.E. DIET PRESSURES, AND REQUESTED THAT ROKG TAKE THIS INTO ACCOUNT. MOFA ASIAN BUREAU DIRECTOR GONG SAID HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED THESE PRIVATE STATEMENTS. KOREAN GOVERNMENT HE SAID WAS ALSO HARD PRESSED BY ITS PRESS AND PUBLIC TO LAY CLAIM TO THE ISLAND AND ROKG HOPED GOJ WOULD UNDERSTAND THIS. MABUCHI APPARENTLY REPLIED THAT GOJ UNDERSTOOD PERFECTLY.

3. MABUCHI COMMENTED THAT THIS LATEST EXCHANGE HAS NOW AGAIN LAID ISSUE TO REST AND THAT NEITHER GOVERNMENT HAS ANY INTEREST WHATSOEVER IN ROUSING IT AGAIN, ALTHOUGH PUBLIC PRESSURES MAY MAKE THIS HARD TO AVOID. HE CONCLUDED HOWEVER, IN CHARACTERISTICALLY WOEFUL STYLE THAT WHEN, AS, AND IF EITHER COUNTRY MAKES 200 MILE FISHING CLAIM, TOKTO ISLAND (AS WE PREFER TO CALL IT) COULD BECOME SOURCE OF MORE SERIOUS PROBLEM.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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